

## The Family

### THE OLD MAN'S LIKE.

"Do you like to jump, oh ever so far  
Off a step, or over a bar,  
Or down a steep hill, not minding the  
bump?"

"No," the old man said, "I don't like to  
jump."

"Do you like to ride on the railroad cars,  
And smell the smoke and feel the jars,  
And watch the fences running to hide?"

"No," the old man said, "I don't care to  
ride."

"Do you like to fish down at the spring,  
And get a crawdad on your string,  
Then bait his hind leg, an' catch what  
you wish?"

"No," the old man said, "I don't like to  
fish."

"Do you like to run and run and run,  
And yell like Injuns—ain't that fun!  
Make the most noise of all the boys?"

"No," the old man said, "I don't like  
noise."

"But surely you like to climb up trees,  
Wa-a-y up in the sky where's always a  
breeze;

And skin the cat up high? That's fine!"

"No," the old man said, "I don't like to  
climb."

"If you don't mind, I wish you'd tell  
If you like anything real well?  
Is there nothing you like?" The old man  
smiled:

"The thing I like best is a little child."  
—Exchange.

### ELSA'S CHRISTMAS BLUES.

By Mary Hoge Wardlaw.

For days she had been dimly aware of  
it, and had dimly struggled against it,  
even before she admitted to herself its  
existence. But there came a morning  
when it passed from the subconscious to  
the conscious stage, and could no longer  
be ignored. Then her husband, after one  
scrutinizing glance, read it in the woe-  
begone countenance behind the coffee-  
urn.

"What's up, young woman?" he cried,  
cheerily. "Christmas blues, already?"  
She gave him a dejected little nod. "Re-  
sist it, grapple with it, trample it under  
foot! Be a she-ro in the strife!" His  
voice rang out in playful vehemence.  
"Say to yourself, Millions of minutes for  
hopefulness, but not one second for de-  
spair."

Elsa understood her husband too well  
to be wounded by his affectionate teas-  
ing; she answered:

"I have resisted, Herbert, and grappled  
and trampled besides. But it's worse  
this year than ever."

"Go out and buy some Christmas  
gifts," he suggested in his natural tones,  
producing a flabby pocket-book, and wav-  
ing it enticingly.

"You know I hardly ever buy my

Christmas gifts, and the slippers and  
center-pieces and the other fol-de-rols are  
all made."

"Christmas baking to do?"

"I finished it up yesterday."

"Any calls to pay?"

"No pressing ones, but that may serve  
to kill a few dismal hours."

When young Mrs. Harvey re-entered  
her cosy little flat that afternoon the  
Christmas Blues, so far from having faded,  
had assumed a deeper hue. She had  
found Cora and Kitty and Louise deep  
in happy mysteries, in pretty little con-  
cealments; their living-rooms gay with  
bits of ribbon and tinsel and lace. A  
curly-haired doll in the act of trying on  
a Parisian costume would be hastily  
thrust into a drawer as its curly-haired  
future mama entered the room. A young  
mother, when fortune favored her, knit  
frantically upon a gorgeous pair of reins,  
tucking them into the depths of her  
work-bag when the prancing steed that  
was to be, woke rosy and dewy from his  
nap. All sorts of bulging and suggestive  
parcels were constantly being delivered  
and whisked out of sight. The young  
matrons seemed to have forgotten all  
topics of conversation save those relat-  
ing to the season, the most effective way  
to decorate a Christmas tree, or the  
newest idea in hanging stockings in a  
flat. Elsa was glad to be at home again.  
"If only this week, if only the next two  
days, were over," she sighed. "It is des-  
perate to be so entirely out of things."

The silence of the apartment smote  
her painfully after the excited Christ-  
mas racket in the other homes; no baby  
voice to chatter ceaselessly about Santa  
Claus, no chubby fingers to tangle her  
silks and worsteds, no little feet to caper  
around ecstatically, no little eyes to  
shine, rapt and angelic, at the story of  
the Christ-child, the song and the star.  
She could easily recall the festive atmos-  
phere of her girlhood's home at this sea-  
son. How dear it all was to her sweet  
German mother, what a joyous occasion  
she made it for her little daughters! The  
smell of the little German Christmas  
cakes, the echo of the Christmas cho-  
ruses, the grandeur of the glittering  
Christmas tree, seemed real to her now.

Tomorrow she would go to see that  
dear mother, a prisoner, through pain, in  
a distant part of the city. She would  
take the fleecy shawl she had knitted for  
the rheumatic shoulders, and she would  
receive a loving welcome, but there  
would be no German cakes or choruses.

Suddenly she sat up straight in her  
easy chair. She knew how to make those  
Christmas cakes. The ingredients that  
made them peculiarly German could eas-  
ily be procured, and how they would re-  
joice the heart of the Mutterchen.

When Herbert returned for his late  
dinner a fragrant smell saluted his nos-  
trils, and an eager, elated little woman  
sprang to meet him, pouring plan after  
plain into his bewildered ear.

The evening sped only too rapidly, for  
Elsa's fingers and tongue ran a merry  
race, and skillful Herbert was very near-  
ly as busy as his enthusiastic little wife.

Christmas eve was brilliantly bracing,  
and Frau Jansen was easily induced to  
spend an hour with a neighbor, the  
neighbor rolling the invalid chair from  
one apartment to another. The swell  
and roar of the streets drowned any un-  
usual sounds within doors, and the two  
old ladies exchanged in their mother  
tongues reminiscences of the days when  
the Kinder were at home for the merry  
season. Scarcely was the hour over  
when Frau Jansen was summoned to re-  
turn, to receive her daughter and her  
son-in-law. The neighbor required no  
pressing to enter awhile and chat with  
her young favorite, Elsa, and gay-spir-  
ited Herbert.

As they reached Frau Jansen's apart-  
ment the door was thrown elaborately  
open, and the dear old mother's mild,  
blue eyes fell upon a dazzling vision.

In the center of the room stood a  
charmingly bedecked Christmas tree,  
festooned with glittering chains, flashing  
with gold and silver balls, and lit up by  
sparkling candles. Grouped around it  
she perceived a circle of familiar faces,  
some of whom she had not beheld for  
years, and every face was beaming with  
good-will.

As she was rolled in a burst of song  
filled the air, a Christmas song brought  
from the Fatherland a reminder of dear  
old days.

Then came greetings, words of good-  
cheer in the hearty German tongue, from  
friends who had not forgotten her, but  
had only been separated by the miles,  
the exactions and distractions of the big  
city.

The little German cakes, so indispen-  
sable to such a gathering, met with an  
appreciative welcome, and disappeared  
like magic. Song succeeded song; the  
violin, in the hands of a master, cast its  
spell upon the hearers, banishing sordid  
thoughts and worldly cares. The Christ-  
mas star, surmounting the tree, shone  
upon smiling faces, but could not out-  
shine the gladness of the gentle, blue  
eyes beneath the silver hair, nor the ra-  
diant countenance of the sweet young  
daughter who had found a cure for her  
Christmas Blues.

### A SELF-MADE CHRISTMAS.

Helen Butler Smith.

Letty Ashworth, only eighteen, desper-  
ately homesick in a boarding house, and  
almost at the end of her money! The  
fact that it was the day before Christ-  
mas aggravated the situation. She had  
sent every dollar she could spare up to  
her Vermont home to go into the ever-  
gaping mouth of the farm mortgage, and  
now in the midst of all the Christmas  
chatter and planning she felt an outcast  
—she who loved to give and could not.

"I haven't a single thing to give to  
anybody," she said to herself. "O dear!  
I do hope none of the girls will wish me  
a Merry Christmas. If they do, I shall  
just scream—or cry."

She looked about her cell-like room.  
It was very clean and very dreary; dif-  
ferentiated from fifty other rooms in the  
Young Women's Home only by the faces